

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PE, BL, CI
SUBJECT: CHILEAN AMBASSADOR IN LIMA DISCUSSES BOLIVIAN
CORRIDOR ISSUE

SUMMARY: CHILEAN AMBASSADOR FRANCISCO BULNES SANFUENTES, IN
A RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH CESAR HILDEBRANDT IN THE MAY 5, 1978
ISSUE OF "CARETAS," MADE SOME SURPRISINGLY FRANK COMMENTS
ABOUT THE ABORTED TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A BOLIVIAN
CORRIDOR TO THE SEA. HE CRITICIZED THE GOP FOR NOT ANSWERING
"YES" OR "NO" TO THE CHILEAN CONSULTATION ON A CORRIDOR AND
ALLEGED THAT BOLIVA WAS HOPING FOR A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN
PERU AND CHILE AS A RESULT OF THE BREAKDOWN IN TALKS. AFFIRMING
THAT CHILEAN INTENTIONS TOWARD BOLIVIA WERE SINCERE, BULNES SAID
THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ANY CHILEAN REGIME TO DEAL WITH
THE GOB BECAUSE OF ITS LACK OF SERIOUSNESS. END SUMMARY.

1. ASKED ABOUT REGIONAL TENSIONS RESULTING FROM THE BREAKDOWN
OF CORRIDOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CHILE AND BOLIVIA, BULNES
REPLIED THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH PRESIDENT BANZER DENIED IT LATER,
THE TWO COUNTRIES DID REACH AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE. HE SAID
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THAT IT WAS CHILE'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PROTOCOL TO THE TREATY
OF LIMA PROVIDED FOR PERU TO RESPOND WITH A SIMPLE "YES" OR
"NO", OR TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS FOR MINOR CHANGES TO ANY CHILEAN
PROPOSAL TO CEDE LAND THAT HAD BEEN PART OF PERU. THE PERUVIAN
SHARED-SOVERIEGNTY COUNTERPROPOSAL INVOLVED MORE SACRIFICE
THAN CHILE COULD ACCEPT AND WOULD HAVE CREATED A SITUATION
THAT WOULD HAVE GIVEN RISE TO FUTURE CONFLICT. BULNES ADDED

THAT IN SPITE OF THESE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF A PROVISION (THE PROTOCOL) THAT HAD NEVER BEEN TESTED BEFORE, RELATIONS BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE REMAINED GOOD, EVEN THOUGH BOLIVIA HAD HOPED THAT THIS DISCREPANCY WOULD PRODUCE CONFLICT.

2. ACCORDING TO BULNES, BOLIVIA RESENTS THE FACT THAT CHILE PASSIVELY REACTED TO THE PERUVIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL, INSTEAD OF ACTIVELY SEEKING A COMPROMISE. AT THE SAME TIME, BANZER BEGAN TO BACK DOWN ON THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL COMPENSATION, MAKING IT ABSURD FOR CHILE TO PURSUE THE QUESTION FURTHER WITH PERU. BULNES ACCUSES BOLIVIAN OF "POCA FORMALIDAD" (LITTLE SERIOUSNESS) IN SUBSEQUENT DEALINGS WITH CHILE AND PERU OVER THE CORRIDOR QUESTION.

3. HILDEBRANDT ASKED BULNES IF CHILE WAS REALLY PREPARED TO CEDE A CORRIDOR TO BOLIVIA. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED: "THE GOVERNMENT AND UNANIMITY OF PUBLIC OPINION WERE DISPOSED, THIS TIME, TOWARD THE CESSION. WE HAVE NOTHING AGAINST BOLIVIANS, AND WE ARE TIRED OF HEARING THAT ALL THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THE BOLIVIAN PEOPLE ARE DUE TO THEIR LACK OF ACCESS TO THE SEA." HE ADDED THAT, BECAUSE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED, "IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ANY GOVERNMENT TO TREAT AGAIN WITH BOLIVIA, FOR FEAR THAT WHAT HAPPENED WITH PRESIDENT BANZER WILL OCCUR AGAIN".

4. COMMENT: THE BULNES-HILDEBRANDT INTERVIEW ALSO TOUCHED ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BILATERAL TIES IN GENERAL AND THE LETELIER CASE. IN THE FACE OF THE REPORTER'S INSISTENT QUESTIONING ON THE LATTER SUBJECT, THE AMBASSADOR BECAME INCREASINGLY DEFENSIVE AND FINALLY STATED BLUNTLY THAT HE WOULD NOT PERMIT THE JOURNALIST TO TURN AN INTERVIEW INTO A JUDGMENT. HIS REMARKS ON THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR ISSUE, IN CONTRAST, WERE REMARKABLY FRANK AND FORTHCOMING, ALMOST TO THE POINT OF BEING UNDIPLOMATIC. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS HIS JUDGMENT (PERHAPS PERSONAL) THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR ANY CHILEAN GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY WITH BOLIVIA ON THE CORRIDOR QUESTION. TEXT OF INTERVIEW BEING POUCHES ADDRESSEE AND INFO POSTS.

DECON 11/15/78.
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